Contra Costa County Historical Society

# BULLETIN

POST OFFICE BOX 190 SEPTEMBER 1977 MARTINEZ, CALIFORNIA 94553

## ARCHITECT TO PRESENT MARSH HOME RESTORATION STORY

*The John Marsh Stone House, 1947*

What's involved in restoring the haunting old stone house, once the dream home of Contra Costa County's ill-starred pioneer, John Marsh? What are the architectural ancestors of the massive structure, slowly deteriorating in a lonely field outside Brentwood?

A fascinating behind-the-scenes look into the Marsh house, its history and its future will be presented by A. Lewis Koué when he addresses the Contra Costa County Historical Society September 21, 1977 at the Walnut Creek Elks Club.

Architectural Historian Koué will introduce his stone house story with a brief look at the man who has been heralded as the first promoter of California on one hand and branded an unpleasant, mean man on the other. Although credited with bringing the glories of the California countryside to the attention of Eastern officials, March is largely remembered for the tragedy and loneliness of his life — a story that ended before either he or his young wife could occupy the great stone house on the Rancho De Los Meganos.

Mr. Koué will show slides of the old Marsh house, detailing what needs to be done to restore the building and tracing its history. The speaker, who has served as consultant on the home's restoration for the architectural firm of Ratcliff, Slama and Cadwalader, will also use slides to illustrate the architectural history of the structure. The program will include slides of 13th century English manor homes, the prototype for the Marsh design.

Justice Bray, Society president, will preside at the meeting. Dinner is at 7:30 p.m. with no-host cocktails at 7 p.m.

## WHERE DOES THE JOHN MARSH RESTORATION PROJECT STAND?

Despite budget hang-ups, governmental red tape and killing inflation, the project to restore John Marsh's Stone House lives on! According to a spokesman for the John Marsh Memorial Association, the old building is in worse shape than at first thought. It will require almost "rebuilding" to bring it up to code for use as a public building. While the Committee would like to use the money now available to shore up the structure and prevent further deterioration, the problem was described as "not that simple." And although revised estimates are ready, County Supervisors must have provisions for funding the entire project before it can be put out to bid. The dollars and cents story to date:

**Current Estimate:** $685,000

**Current Funds:** $370,000 ($185,000, State Park Bond Act, 1974; $150,000 from the Cowell Foundation, $10,000 from the John Marsh Memorial Association, $20,000 from the Historic Preservation Fund, $5,000 from the County).

Committee members hope the additional funds still needed will be included in County Revenue Sharing Funds.

*Dr. John Marsh with wife, Abby Tuck Marsh, and daughter, Alice.*

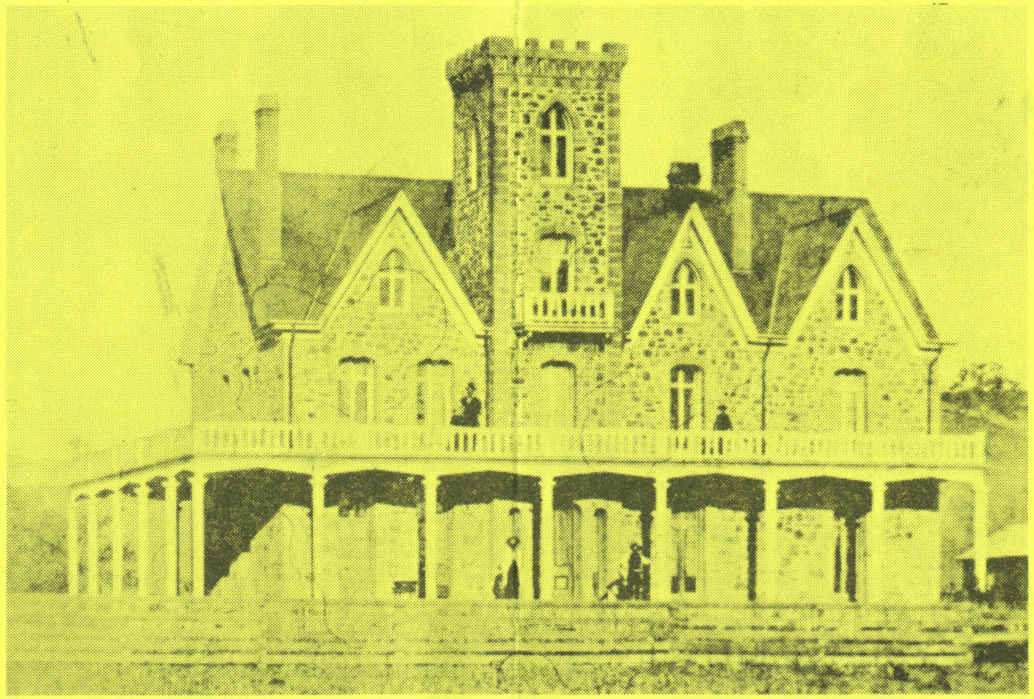
## GUEST SPEAKER

Few professionals in the field of historical architecture can match the achievements and honors of A. Lewis Koué. A resident of Oakland, Mr. Koué received an M.A. in architecture from the University of Calif. in 1929. He's founding president of the East Bay chapter, American Institute of Architects, and a Fellow Emeritus of the American Institute of Architects. After retiring from private practice as an architect in 1962, he accepted a position with the National Park Service in the Division of Historic Architecture and Historic American Building Survey covering all of the United States West of the Mississippi river and including Alaska and Hawaii. He retired from the National park service in 1972 and since that time has been retained by the Park Service for reconstruction of Hudson's Bay Port, Fort Vancouver, Washington and Fort Point, San Francisco. He is currently chairman of Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board for the City of Oakland, is a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the California Heritage Council and the California Historical Society. For several years Mr. Koué has been State Chairman of the Historic Preservation Committee, A.I.A. and a member of the National Committee.

## NEW DUES STRUCTURE ANNOUNCED

Society Directors voted in August to restructure the dues to accommodate a variety of individuals, businesses and organizations. New dues, which will take effect January, 1978, are: $3, student; $7.50, individual; $10.00, couple; $25.00, business or contributing member; $150, individual Life membership, $200 couple Life membership. Memorial gifts are also welcome.

*The stone house after the 1868 earthquake*



*John Marsh home before the 1868 earthquake with all rock tower and balcony. Marsh's son, Charles, is on the balcony porch.*

# MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!

Your Society's Board of Directors has set up the following schedule for the 1977-78 year. Details for individual meetings will follow.

**September 21, 1977** — A. Lewis Koué, F.A.I.A. *"John Marsh House."*

**October 29, 1977** — Path of History — Full day bus excursion including visits to Mission San Jose, New Almaden Museum, San Jose Historical museum and park, Don Peralta Adobe, Santa Clara Mission.

**December 3, 1977** — 40th Anniversary of Caldecott Tunnel opening — Joint meeting with Alameda Historical Society.

**February 22, 1978** — To be announced.

**May 17, 1978** — To be announced.

## CONTRA COSTA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## MEMBERSHIP MEETING

### Dinner and Program

**Speaker:** Mr. A. Lewis Koué, F.A.I.A.

**Date:** September 21, 1977

**Place:** Walnut Creek Elks Club
1475 Creekside Drive
Walnut Creek

**Time:** 7:00 p.m. No-host Cocktails
7:30 p.m. — Buffet Dinner $5.50

**Reservations:** (By September 12, please)
J. B. Jory, Secretary
P.O. Box 190
Martinez, CA 94553
Phone: 228-4534

**COME ONE! COME ALL!**